

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received JAN 30 1985

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic

and/or common WASHINGTON COMMON HISTORIC DISTRICT

2. Location

(At the intersection of Half Moon  
street & number NH Rte. 31 Pond Rd. & Millen Pond Rd.) N/A not for publication

city, town Washington, vicinity of

state New Hampshire code 33 county Sullivan code 019

3. Classification

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name (see continuation sheet)

street & number

city, town vicinity of state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Sullivan County Courthouse  
Sullivan County Registry of Deeds  
street & number P.O. Box 448  
28 Main Street  
city, town Newport, state New Hampshire 03773

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☐ no

date N/A ☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A state

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The Washington Common Historic District consists of three public buildings dating from the late 18th to 19th centuries, embodying vernacular versions of classically-derived styles. The structures are set in a hilltop clearing against a backdrop of white pines on the north side of Washington Common, which was formed from two acres of Joseph Rounsevel's farm sold to the town in 1787. The section of road fronting the buildings remains unpaved and combines with the stark landscape and lack of plantings around the buildings to greatly enhance the simplicity of these vernacular structures.

The nominated district contains three contributing buildings, one contributing structure, one contributing object, and one contributing site. The structures which comprise the district are as follows (see sketch map):

**1. Washington Congregational Meeting House (currently known as Washington Congregational Church)**

A simple white clapboarded structure, rectangular in plan, the Washington Center Church is dominated by a Gothic-inspired two stage square tower adorned by pointed pinnacles and crenellation. Situated with its gable front facing southwest, the church measures approximately forty feet wide and fifty feet deep and is set above a granite block foundation. Two doorways mark the pedimented facade with a carriage light and small wooden sign located between them. The wide wooden doors each feature two rows of three recessed vertical panels capped by an upper horizontal panel. Half sidelights with four panes in each strip flank the sides of the doorways. The door surrounds feature cornerblocks with recessed circles, a central recessed oval panel over each door and simple bases. The side panels of the surrounds are decorated by a raised meander motif. Each doorway is fronted by a granite step.

A 12/8 doublehung window flanked by full sidelights and wide louvered blinds is centered on the second floor of the facade with the top of the window flush with the soffit of the pediment. Centered in the pediment is a louvered pointed arch fan. A simple projecting cornice, plain cornerboards and baseboards outline the structure.

The side elevations are each four bays wide, containing 20/20 doublehung windows with simple surrounds and storm windows. Blinds have been removed.

A two stage square tower is located on the front ridge of the asphalt-shingled roof. The windowless clapboarded base supports an open belfry with pointed arch openings on the second level. Grooved stickwork overlays the flushboard on this level, outlining the arches and the corners with projecting moldings marking the spring line of each. Triglyph-like blocks decorate the area below the projecting cornice. Pyramidal pinnacles resting on rectangular blocks mark the corners of each stage and are spanned by crenellation.

The rear elevation is without windows and features eaves which cling closely to the shingled wall. A central entrance has recently been added below grade and is sheltered by a simple canopy.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1787–89, 1840, 1883 **Builder/Architect** see text

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

A well-preserved example of a traditional rural New Hampshire townscape, the Washington Common Historic District figures significantly in the area of American architecture. Historically functioning as a local center of religious, educational and social activity, the juxtaposition of simple vernacular forms and the stark landscape, unspoiled by landscaping or overbeautification combine to give this district a classic New Hampshire quality. The Washington Center church, school and meetinghouse form a homogenous group considered one of the finest of its period in the State, and certainly among the most-photographed.

The cornerstone of the district is the Washington Town Hall, constructed between 1787–1789. Originally a simple two story meetinghouse, the building was greatly enhanced by the addition of an Asher Benjamin-inspired steeple in 1820. Benjamin (1771–1845) was known to be in Windsor, Vermont in 1797 and exerted much influence over Connecticut Valley builders through his widely-used architectural handbooks. The design for the tower may derive from Benjamin's Country Builder's Assistant (1797), translated and simplified by the hands of local carpenters. Typical of meetinghouses of its period, the main door is in the center of the long elevation, with the pulpit originally opposite the entrance. The Town House is without parallel in the region, although the Meeting House in Rockingham, Vermont, built in 1787 is similar, but without a tower. According to Sara Chase of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, the Washington Town House is one of the oldest Meetinghouses in New England still in continuous use.<sup>16</sup>

Near completion of the meetinghouse by 1789 established the center of town and gave new impetus to building around it. The Washington Congregational Church, built in 1840, is one of four churches constructed in Washington between 1839 and 1842 and is an excellent example of the Gothic Revival style as interpreted by builder Peter Cook. Typical of the Gothic Revival style are the pinnacles and crenellation adorning the roof and pointed arch form. Here too, the influence of Asher Benjamin is apparent as evidenced in the meander pattern flanking the doorway. The church remains today an excellent index to the tastes and skills of a rural New Hampshire town.

The Schoolhouse built in 1883 is a simple clapboarded structure, echoing its neighbors in massing, materials, orientations and simplicity. In terms of architecture, its most notable feature is certainly its compatibility with its more architecturally distinguished companions. The setting of these structures is enhanced by a variety of monuments, a sign, bandstand and their common siting fronting the Common.

As a group and individually, these three public structures are a showplace of the practicality and skills of a small New Hampshire town. Representing as they do religious, governmental, educational and civic concerns, these three buildings embody the essential characteristics of the 19th century New England in general and of Washington in particular. While each has evolved on the interior, the exteriors remain basically unchanged from their 18th and 19th century appearances. None has become a museum piece but rather each has retained a useful and intimate role in the community's daily life. All are fine examples of their respective styles and periods.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

(see continuation sheet)

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 2.2 acres

Quadrangle name Lovewell Mountain, NH

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

UTM References

A 

1	8
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7	3	6	0	0	0
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4	4	8	4	2	5	0
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Zone

Easting

Northing

B 

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Zone

Easting

Northing

C 

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H 

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Verbal boundary description and justification

(see continuation sheet)

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code
N/A			

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lisa Mausolf, Preservation Specialist

organization Upper Valley-Lake Sunapee Council

date July 1985

street & number 314 National Bank Building

telephone (603) 448-1680

city or town Lebanon,

state New Hampshire 03766

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*Shirley G. Adamovich*

title New Hampshire State Historic Preservation Officer

date 1/24/86

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

*Patrick Andrus*

date 3/14/86

*fa* Keeper of the National Register

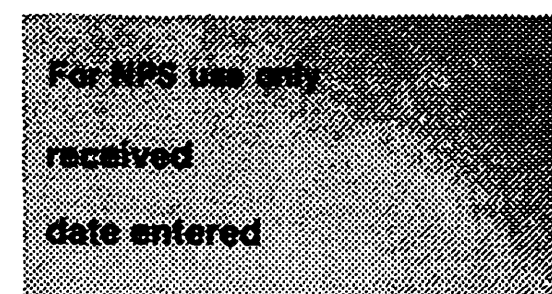
Attest: *Beth L. Savage*

date 3-13-86

Chief of Registration

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**LIST OF OWNERS**

1. Washington Congregational Church  
c/o Rev. H.G. Anderson  
Upper Village  
Hillsboro, NH 03244
2. Washington School District #2  
School Board  
Washington, NH 03280
3. Town of Washington  
P.O. Box 110  
Washington, NH 03280
4. Town of Washington  
P.O. Box 110  
Washington, NH 03280

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Organized in 1780 the Congregational Church's early meetings were held in members' homes and later in the Town Meeting House completed by about 1789, prior to the construction of the present church in 1840. During this period, Washington reached its peak of population (1,135 persons in 1830) as is evidenced in the fact that all of Washington's churches were erected between 1827 and 1878, with four constructed between 1839 and 1842. As was typical of country churches of its period, the Congregational Church was the product of members' cash gifts, of voluntary labor and the selling of pews, which ranged in price from \$26 to \$50. The church was built with the permission of the town, leasing the land on which it stands. In 1839 a building committee was formed, consisting of Henry Train, Jonathan Kendall, Samuel Burbank and David McQueston with a committee of two, Samuel Burbank and Joshua Jaquith appointed to take care of the building. A builder of unknown origin, Peter Cook, was retained at a cost of \$1176.<sup>1</sup>

Although membership in the church has never been large enough to fill the sanctuary, this church has always served the community. By the 1880's services were held only in the summer, the pulpit often filled by theological students from Yale. In the early 1890's a brief economic revival in town coincided with renewed interest and attendance at the church. In 1891 the gallery was closed off to create the classroom space which now serves as the Sunday School room. In 1960 a fire in the Church resulted in several thousand dollars damage. A full basement was built under the church in 1985 to provide space for classes and events and also an improved heating system and the simple arched sanctuary has remained in keeping with the original interior design, features wide board wainscoting and wooden pews. Two doorways with fluted surrounds and cornerblocks are located behind the pulpit. At the rear the choir loft has been enclosed to form a Sunday School Room. The interior will soon undergo long needed maintenance work.

**2. Washington Center Schoolhouse**

Facing southwesterly and located between the Congregational Church and the Town Hall is the 2½ story clapboarded Washington Center Schoolhouse, constructed in 1883. Set above a brick foundation, the school measures two bays wide and four bays deep, approximately 24'5" x 36'4". Dual entrances mark the facade, each containing a simple wooden door with a group of nine (3 x 3) panes in the upper section. (The doors are not original.) An electric metal carriage light is located between the doors. Two 2/2 doublehung windows with simple surrounds, entablature lintels and exterior storm windows light the second story of the facade with a similar window in the attic, framed by cornice returns supported by plain cornerboards. Only the facade windows feature blinds. Rising from the front of the roof ridge is an open clapboarded belfry, square in plan, with pointed arch openings. It is capped by a pyramid roof with projecting eaves and decorative arrow weathervane atop a wooden obelisk. The bell bears the inscription "Henry McShane & Co., Baltimore, Maryland, 1883."

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Four individual 2/2 windows light each floor of the west elevation while the first floor of the east side features a single 2/2 window in the first bay of each floor and a continuous row of six larger windows. An iron exterior staircase descends from the rear of the second floor on this elevation, inserted between the third and fourth bays. All of the four windows on the upper floor of the east elevation contain 2/2 sash. Windows on the east and west sides have storm windows.

A small chimney is situated on the rear ridge of the asphalt roof. Centered on the rear elevation is a gable-roofed addition, not as wide as the main building, with two small 6/6 windows, a horizontally panelled door and a larger 2/2 window on the first floor.

The school was originally built as a one classroom building with the second floor housing a storage area, stage and lunch room at various periods over the years. A wide stairway provides access across the front inside wall. In 1949 the addition was put on with a lean-to roof to provide toilets and a central heating system. By 1960 due to increased enrollment the second floor became another classroom. In 1980 the shed roof of the addition was converted to a gable to allow space for a larger second story.

The third school on this site since 1813, the Center School was constructed in 1883, two years after the union of the then declining Tubbs Union Academy and School District No. 1 of Washington. The building replaced a previous brick structure. The plan of the schoolhouse was drawn by a committee consisting of F.P. Newman, J.L. Safford and H.C. Young, with Hoyt and Gillingham serving as contractors.<sup>2</sup> In 1884 the school bell was placed in the cupola, donated by the Students' Literary and Dramatic Societies. The Washington School District contained ten districts at its height. Since 1946 this schoolhouse serving District No. 1 has been the only operating elementary school in town. Storm windows were installed in 1947. Extensive interior alterations in 1950 included the addition of running water, toilets, sinks and a central heating system replacing wood stoves. The building was unfortunately sandblasted in 1984, though there is no serious damage evident at the present time.

**3. Washington Meeting House** (later known as the Town House and currently as Town Hall)

The Washington Town Hall, originally raised as a meetinghouse in 1787, is the civic and visual focal point of Washington Center. Located east of the school, its gable front is perpendicular to the other two structures. Originally a simple two story clapboarded structure, rectangular in plan with east and west porches, the tower and belfry rising from the northwestern end were added in 1820. Clapboards with feathered edges decrease in width of courses from the top to the bottom. The main structure rests on a combination of rubble and old brick. According to building records, bricks were the original underpinning with over 8,000 purchased from neighboring towns.<sup>3</sup>



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The building's original main entrance is centered on the long south elevation which measures about sixty feet long and contains seven bays. The four panel door (originally there were double doors) is framed by half sidelights with six on each side and transom lights above. Fluted pilasters support a full pediment. Carriage lights and a wooden information box flank the door which is fronted by three granite steps.

Above the doorway is a small wooden sign with a white background and black letters reading "Washington/Incorporated 1776/This building erected/1789". (Recent research clearly changes this date to 1787.) Windows on this elevation and most of the rest of the structure are doublehung 20/20 with storm windows and entablature lintels. The muntins, painted black in 1960 help to emphasize the panes under the storm windows and were historically accurate for the mid to late 19th century. Plain cornerboards, baseboards and a boxed cornice outline the building.

The northeast (rear) elevation is six bays wide and displays the same window form. The center of the elevation lacks a window corresponding to that on the facade. A metal staircase descends from the second floor. Located in the center of this elevation is a single story shed addition housing the heating system and rest rooms. It displays shallow side eaves and a boxed cornice with a single vertically panelled door. The addition is set on a concrete block and rubble foundation.

Attached to the center of the northwest elevation which measures 45' long, is a 40' tall three story square tower measuring thirteen feet square. This structure replaced a porch identical to the east porch. A six panel door capped by five transom lights provides an entrance from the south side. There is evidence of an older entrance on the west side of the tower.

A single 20/20 window is located on the west facade of each of the upper two floors of the tower. Above the projecting cornice and flat rooftop is a stick railing with corner urns. The first stage consists of an open octagonal belfry supported by octagonal columns and decorated by a frieze of triglyphs with guttae below a cornice comprised of mutules with drilled holes. A plain railing with urns at the eight corner points, caps this stage. The upper most stage consists of an octagonal drum with louvered rectangular openings flanked by pilasters, decorated by a plain frieze, cable molding and dentils. The metal cushion roof is topped by a decorative arrow weathervane.

The east side measures five bays wide with a small gable-roofed enclosed porch centered on the elevation set above a brick and rubble foundation. A similar porch on the west side apparently preceded the tower. Located on the first floor of the porch is a six panel door with a 6/6 window above. On the east side of the porch is a window opening with a recessed panel below, possibly formerly housing a doorway, and a small 6/6 window above. A large segmentally-divided circular window lights the attic. As visible on the other end, shallow cornice returns decorate the elevation. A single brick chimney projects from the interior of the asphalt-shingled roof, near the ridge.



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In August 1785 the Town of Washington chose a committee consisting of Deacon Jaquith, Captain Lemuel Tabor, Captain Samuel Draper, Lieutenant Ebenezer Wood and Major Ephraim Davis to present a plan for a meetinghouse. Accepted one month later, it was nearly a year before the first meeting of the committee to obtain materials for the building was held on August 21, 1786. On September 4, 1786 it was decided that "all hewing timber should be cut in the old of the moon in September and October" and decided that the windows should be glazed with squares of glass, seven by nine inches, forty panes to the window. In May 1787 a number of hands were employed for framing and by September 1787 a contract was made with John Safford to provide lumber for the galleries at fifteen shillings a thousand.<sup>4</sup> Begun in 1787, the building was enclosed that year and in final stages of finishing inside by 1789 with help from "a large quantity of New England rum...tubs of home-made beer... and a large quantity of pies, puddings, baked beans, and loaves of brown bread."<sup>5</sup> Owing to a lack of adequate currency and the fact that the resources of the town and country had been crippled by the war, provisions and materials for constructing the house were often taken in place of money.

It has been assumed that the master builder was Church Tabor, an early settler who was responsible for the interior decorative piers and fine wood working as well as the framing.<sup>6</sup> A man named Cap Cummings, of unknown origins, was in charge of raising the framework with 28 other men. According to December 1794 minutes the exterior was "to be the color of the Alstead Meeting House", (white and spruce yellow), "and roof of Spanish Brown".<sup>7</sup>

In 1820 Luther Mellen and a committee consisting of B. Story, Joseph Healy, and David Farnsworth were given permission to erect a tower and belfry replacing the west enclosed porch.<sup>8</sup> The town paid for repairs to the main structure with subscriptions within the town funding the remaining costs. The bell dates to 1826 and was manufactured by the George H. Holbrook Co., of East Medway, Massachusetts. A committee was appointed by the town to be present when the bell was cast to see that twenty silver dollars were, as promised, added to the molten metal to enhance the sweetness of its tone.<sup>9</sup>

Originally a large open structure, with galleries on three sides, the interior of the building has undergone numerous changes over the years. As built, one entered on the long side of the building facing the high pulpit ascended by stairways on either side and located to the right of the present moderators box. Some of the original pew panels were used to build the podium. Slits in the south, west and north walls indicate where panels for the old box pews were placed. Five fluted piers echoing classical architectural orders originally supported the galleries. Today, three of these survive with a fourth plain pier added for support when the second floor was built about 1843, resulting in a large assembly room upstairs and downstairs. Some of the old galleries still remain upstairs. Tubbs Union Academy (1849-81) was responsible for many changes in the interior, though in 1842 someone "was given the privilege of flooring the Town House and making other improvements with no expense to the town". By 1843 a second floor was in place. In 1849 a partition was built on the main floor and at an undetermined time a stage was built on the east end of the second floor and then rebuilt in the 1870's by the Washington Debating Society.<sup>10</sup>

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Half-hearted plans to renovate the Town Hall in the 1880's thankfully went unheeded. In 1880 a warrant article designed apparently to bring out the voters en masse read: "To see if the town will vote to turn the Town House one half around so the Belfry will face the Monument" and was subsequently soundly defeated. In 1882 a warrant article read: "To see if the Town will vote to give Tubbs Union Academy leave to reconstruct the lower part of the Town House for school purposes, provided they will furnish a selectmen's room and reconstruct the upper part for Town purposes and put on a front and a stairway". Plans and drawings for a long piazza adorning the front of the building were presented by George Fowler, a leading citizen and millwright. This proposal was also defeated by a majority of the voters.<sup>11</sup>

The northeast corner of the Town House was enclosed for a Selectmen's room about 1885, dividing the main floor into thirds with one large meeting room on the west and a Grange Room and Selectmen's Room on the east. An extension behind the Town House first capped by a gable roof was later enlarged and a shed roof added though, as originally, the addition was a simple outhouse. Now it houses the heating system and toilets.

Architects Stevens and Lee prepared measured drawings of the building in 1932 in anticipation of immediate repairs but they were not carried out at that time. The 1938 hurricane severely damaged the cupola which was subsequently repaired. In 1944, the building underwent substantial repairs including work on the supports and foundation and replacement of much of the original window glass. Most of the original panelling has disappeared over the years although pieces were probably used in the moderator's box, on the adjoining north wall and along the east wall of the main room. The last twenty years have seen improvements to the plumbing and heating systems. Blown-in insulation and improved central heating were added in 1980. Over the years in addition to the Congregational Church and Town Meetings the building has housed Universalists, Spiritualists, the Tubbs Union Academy, Lovell Grange, Lovell Cornet Band, the Washington Dramatic Society and the Washington Debating Society. The Post Office was located in the Grange Room in 1974. Still the center of the Town's communal life, the large room on the first floor of the building is used for town meetings, voting, town committee meetings and often rented on weekends for dinners and receptions. The two east rooms are now used as a Selectmen's Office and 7th and 8th grade classrooms with the school library, music and gym classes on the second floor. The old stage performs its original function 100 years later and dances upstairs are an ever-threatening presence.

**4. Washington Common**

The Washington Town Common has its origins in two acres of farmland laid out by an appointed committee in March 1787 and sold by Joseph Rounsevel to the Town by May of the same year. (The original deed hangs in the Shedd Free Library). The near completion of the meetinghouse by 1789 established the center of town and gave new impetus to building around it. Over the years a variety of small buildings were built on the town-owned property shared by the Church, School and Town Hall, including woodsheds, a town garage,

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and several horsebarns as well as leasing land to an adjacent property owner to erect a building with hay scales; none of which survive today. The original Town Pound, located on the northeast corner of the Town Hall, was lost in recent years in a boundary line adjustment to the neighbor next door but its stone walls survive obscured by trees and vegetation. Today, the total town-owned parcel numbers 3.95 acres and includes parking space to the northeast and a playground area to the north. The northwest to southwest boundary line has been slightly altered from the original as has the northeast to southeast line. The dirt road between the Civil War Monument and the meetinghouse are part of the original common, as is the land upon which the bandstand, state sign, and monument (see below) are located. While the edges may have changed the original common (2.189 acres) survives intact.

- 4 a. Located to the southeast of the Town House is a row of three monuments. That nearest the road is a bronze tablet on a granite rock of local origin in memory of Brig. Gen. Sylvanus Thayer, "father of West Point" who spent from 1793 to 1807 in Washington as a youth. Behind this and facing westward is a concrete slab housing a time capsule sealed August 1980, to be opened July 4, 2020. Lastly is a rectangular piece of polished granite housing a bicentennial time capsule, sealed in 1976 and to be opened in 2076. In front of the school is a flagpole.
- 4 b. Situated in the grassy rectangle south of the meeting house and bordered on the north side by a gravel road is the Civil War Monument, dedicated to twelve local men who died in the Rebellion. Reportedly the first to be erected by a town in the State of New Hampshire at a cost of \$2,000, the monument was dedicated on September 17, 1867.<sup>12</sup> It was erected by a group of private citizens who asked the town's permission to site it on the common.

Shaded by mature maple trees, a fence of twenty seven rockfaced granite posts with smooth margins surrounds the monument with three 3x3" posts on edge between each, held to the stone by large iron hardware. There are openings in the fence at the center of each of the long sides. The fence measures 91' x 56' x 91' x 38'. Six granite steps rise from the long southeast side to the monument. A platform of granite curbing filled with gravel supports two square granite blocks of decreasing size, the upper block bearing a notation "1865". Located above is a rectangular platform with arched panels commemorating the fallen soldiers, capped by a plain projecting cornice marked "1861" which supports the obelisk, for a total height of about 19 feet. The stone pieces and inscriptions were cut by David Blanchard of West Concord. The Town assumed ownership and maintenance of the monument in 1873. Four simple granite hitching posts mark the east boundary. They were brought from a local quarry by Luther A. Mellen.<sup>13</sup> Located at the west end of the grassy area containing the Civil War monument is a small rock of local origin, serving as a War Memorial. A bronze plaque on it reads "To honor those from Washington who served, 1898 - 1917 - 1941."

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4c. Since 1891 a bandstand has occupied the triangular grassy island framed by the intersection of Millen Pond Road and Route 31. The original roofless bandstand of 1891 was destroyed in 1933 due to its rotting timbers. A new covered bandstand was constructed in 1934. Octagonal in plan it measures 53' around and 17' high, featuring alternated chamfered posts, plain spindles and exposed rafters. The band shelter has housed the Washington Band and guest bands from the surrounding area over the years, with the Town appropriating funds for many years for the concerts. An integral part of the old common and village life, the bandstand has also been used as a meeting place where children gather to and from school and summer activities as well as for a few weddings. A gilded ball donated by a descendent of a local family, Fred Ball, once placed atop the roof has long since disappeared.<sup>14</sup>

4d. Located in the grassy triangle formed by the intersection of Half Moon Pond Road and Route 31, between the bandstand and Civil War Monument, is a rectangular iron highway marker erected by the State in 1932 to commemorate the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of George Washington. At the top of the sign is a painted relief depicting Washington on a horse. Below raised black letters on a white background read, "N.H. / Washington / the first town / incorporated / under the Name of / George Washington / Our First President / December 13, 1776 / Erected November 1932."

A serious fire in 1830 destroyed a total of seventeen buildings in Washington Center as well as igniting the roof of the meetinghouse. Many were apparently rebuilt and today neighbors of the public structures fronting the common include a variety of well-preserved residential structures dating from the late 18th-19th centuries, representing a variety of styles from Georgian to Greek Revival as well as the Shedd Free Library (1881), and Post Office (1975). The impression of a town center was previously heightened by the existence of the Lovell House, a large hotel located to the west of the Congregational Church, which brought large numbers of summer visitors to Washington before it was taken down in 1935 when it became a liability to the Town.

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**FOOTNOTES**

- 1 "Records of the Properties of the First Congregational Meeting House, Washington, N.H., 1840-1853." Unpublished manuscript, N.H. Historical Society.
- 2 History of Washington, New Hampshire 1768-1886. (Claremont, N.H.: Claremont Manufacturing Co., 1886; reprint ed., Washington, N.H.: Washington History Committee, 1973), p. 247-248.
- 3 This information is contained in a small booklet uncovered in the Town Archives by Sally Krone about two years ago (see 3rd & 4th page of the Building Records Booklet). These building records are referred to in History of Washington, New Hampshire 1768-1886, p. 30-31 as follows: "They voted that there be a book procured to record all matters transacted in said committee".
- 4 "Congregational Church of Washington, N.H.", 1912, N.H. Historical Society, Concord, N.H., p. 3.
- 5 History of Washington, New Hampshire 1768-1886, p. 33.
- 6 "Congregational Church of Washington, N.H.", p. 3.
- 7 Town of Washington, Selectmen's Minutes, December 1794.
- 8 During this period Alstead boasted two separate meetinghouses. The first was initially proposed in 1781 and built in 1786. The second, proposed in 1786, was begun in 1793, with work continuing in 1797 and the paint job not begun until 1801. As stated in the town history the second meetinghouse was to be painted the "same color of the meetinghouse in the west part of town". Thus while the description of the paint scheme included in the text actually came after the construction of the Washington Meetinghouse, it aptly describes as well the paint scheme of the first Alstead meetinghouse which apparently was the inspiration for the original color scheme of the Washington building. See Marion Rawson, New Hampshire Borne a Town. New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1942: p. 162-164.
- 9 Town of Washington, Selectmen's Minutes, March 1820.
- 10 "Congregational Church of Washington, N.H.", p. 4.
- 11 Ronald and Grace Jager, Portrait of a Hill Town: Washington, New Hampshire 1876-1976. Washington, N.H.: Washington History Committee, 1977, p. 473.
- 12 Jager, p. 46.
- 13 Jager, p. 53.

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**FOOTNOTES (continued)**

14 Ibid.

15 Jager, p. 56.

16 Sara Chase, Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities to Sally Krone,  
24 April 1985.



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**MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

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History of Washington, New Hampshire. Claremont, N.H.: Claremont Manufacturing Co., 1886; reprint ed., Washington, N.H.: Washington History Committee, 1976.

Jager, Ronald & Grace, Portrait of a Hill Town; Washington, N.H. 1876 - 1976

Washington: Washington History Committee, 1977. (Town and State Libraries)

"Records of the Properties of the First Congregational Meeting House, Washington, N.H., 1840 - 1853". Unpublished manuscript, N.H. Historical Society, Concord, N.H.

Washington Town Archives, Washington, N.H.



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**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The boundaries of the nominated district are those indicated by a dashed line on the attached sketch map. The property being nominated is lot number 12 from Map 22 in the Washington Assessor's office, but excluding the more recent section added at the rear.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The boundary of the nominated district is drawn to include that acreage which survives from the original Town Common and which is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The additional abutting parcel owned by the Town, to the north of the common recent acquisition to be used for parking as well as a playground has been purposely excluded from the district boundary. Boundaries are sufficient to convey the original context and protect it.

**NOTE**

Boundaries of the nominated district have been highlighted in yellow on the attached sketch map.

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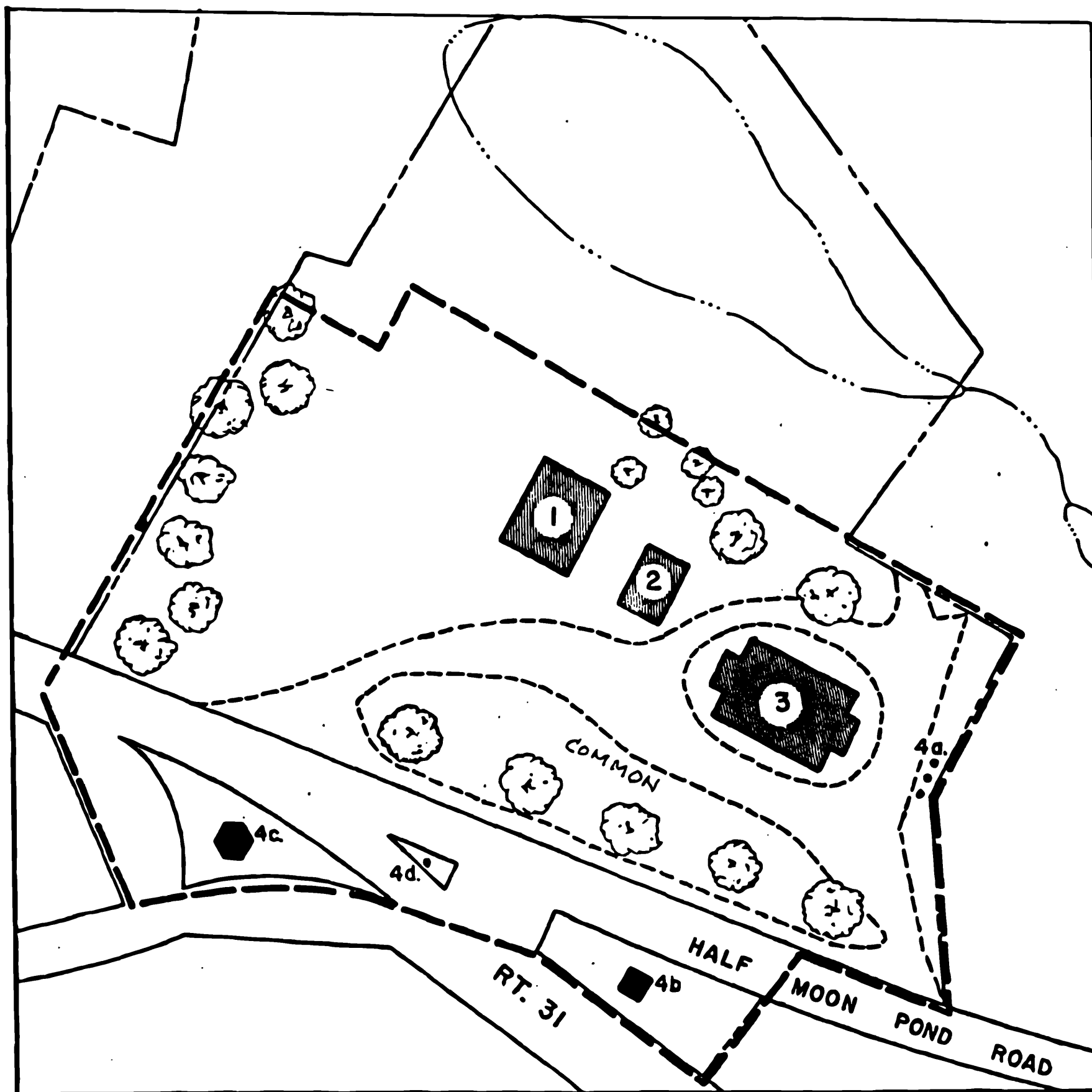
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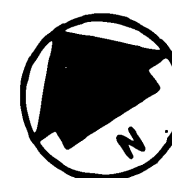
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350 0 350 700  
Scale Approx.

WASHINGTON COMMON  
HISTORIC DISTRICT  
WASHINGTON, N.H.



CONTRIBUTING  
ELEMENTS

- 1 Church
- 2 School
- 3 Town Hall
- The Common
- 4b.
- 4c.

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This certifies that the appearance of the photographs has not changed.